

I CLAIM:

1. A campfire safety apparatus for installation around a campfire fire ring creating a barrier shielding people and animals from unintentional contact with the campfire, comprising:

5 at least one rigid safety panel having a lower rail, an upper rail, and a plurality of interconnected intermediate rails providing structural integrity and increasing the panel's effectiveness as a barrier, wherein the rigid safety panel encloses a campfire and the upper rail is above the campfire flame height.

10 2. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 1, wherein the free area ratio of the rigid safety panel is at least fifty percent.

3. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 1, wherein the free area ratio of the rigid safety panel is at least eight-five percent.

15 4. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 2, wherein the at least one rigid safety panel for enclosing a campfire consists of a plurality of portable interlocking rigid safety panels, each having a lower rail, an upper rail, a first sidewall rail having a pin receiver, and a second sidewall rail having a pin receiver, wherein the pin receivers on adjacent rigid safety panels cooperate to
20 receive a pin, having a proximal end and a distal end, that releasably secures the adjacent panels together.

5. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 4, wherein the distal end of at least one of the pins extends through the cooperating pin receivers and terminates into the ground to anchor the apparatus.

5 6. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 5, further including an anchor on the distal end of at least one of the pins to facilitate easy ingress of the distal end into the ground, resist egress from the ground, and prevent rotation.

7. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 5, further including a screw on the distal end of at
10 least one of the pins to facilitate easy ingress of the distal end into the ground and resist unintended egress from the ground.

8. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 4, wherein one of the portable interlocking rigid safety panels has an upper panel section and a lower panel section, the sections are rotably joined
15 so that the upper panel section may rotate down about an intermediate hinge to permit greater access to the campfire fire ring and its contents, and having a retainer to secure the upper panel section in place when greater access is not required.

9. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 2, further including a rigid top panel having a
20 perimeter rail and a plurality of interconnected intermediate rails, wherein the perimeter rail cooperates with the rigid safety panel upper rail to prevent unintentional contact with the campfire from above the upper rail.

10. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 2, further including a campfire accessory tool having a plurality of connection devices that cooperate with the rails of the rigid safety panel to releasably fasten the tool to the rigid safety panel.

5 11. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 2, further including a plurality of auxiliary supports to secure the apparatus to the campfire fire ring thereby further adding stability to the apparatus.

12. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 11, wherein the auxiliary supports have a
10 telescoping rod with a distal end and a proximal end, a fire ring pad attached to the distal end to rigidly secure the support to the fire ring, and a panel interface at the proximal end to rigidly secure the support to the rigid safety panel.

13. A campfire safety apparatus for installation around a campfire fire ring creating a barrier
15 shielding people and animals from unintentional contact with the campfire, comprising:

a plurality of portable interlocking rigid safety panels, each having a lower rail, an upper rail, a first sidewall rail having a pin receiver, and a second sidewall rail having a pin receiver, wherein the pin receivers on adjacent rigid safety panels cooperate to receive a pin, having a proximal end and a distal end, that releasably secures the adjacent panels together, and a plurality
20 of interconnected intermediate rails providing structural integrity and increasing the panels effectiveness as a barrier, while maintaining a free area ratio of the rigid safety panel of at least eighty-five percent, wherein the rigid safety panel encloses a campfire and the upper rail is above the campfire flame height.

14. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 13, wherein the distal end of at least one of the pins extends through the cooperating pin receivers and terminates into the ground to anchor the apparatus.

5

15. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 14, further including an anchor on the distal end of at least one of the pins to facilitate easy ingress of the distal end into the ground, resist egress from the ground, and prevent rotation.

10 16. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 14, further including a screw on the distal end of at least one of the pins to facilitate easy ingress of the distal end into the ground and resist unintended egress from the ground.

15 17. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 13, wherein one of the portable interlocking rigid safety panels has an upper panel section and a lower panel section, the sections are rotably joined so that the upper panel section may rotate down about an intermediate hinge to permit greater access to the campfire fire ring and its contents, and having a retainer to secure the upper panel section in place when greater access is not required.

20 18. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 13, further including a rigid top panel having a perimeter rail and a plurality of interconnected intermediate rails, wherein the perimeter rail cooperates with the rigid safety panel upper rail to prevent unintentional contact with the campfire from above the upper rail.

19. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 13, further including a campfire accessory tool having a plurality of connection devices that cooperate with the rails of the rigid safety panel to releasably fasten the tool to the rigid safety panel.

5

20. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 13, further including a plurality of auxiliary supports to secure the apparatus to the campfire fire ring thereby further adding stability to the apparatus.

10 21. The campfire safety apparatus of claim 20, wherein the auxiliary supports have a telescoping rod with a distal end and a proximal end, a fire ring pad attached to the distal end to rigidly secure the support to the fire ring, and a panel interface at the proximal end to rigidly secure the support to the rigid safety panel.

15 22. A campfire safety apparatus for installation around a campfire fire ring creating a barrier shielding people and animals from unintentional contact with the campfire, comprising:

a plurality of portable interlocking rigid safety panels, each having a lower rail, an upper rail, a first sidewall rail having a pin receiver, and a second sidewall rail having a pin receiver, wherein the pin receivers on adjacent rigid safety panels cooperate to receive a pin, having a
20 proximal end and a distal end, that releasably secures the adjacent panels together and terminates into the ground with an anchor to facilitate easy ingress of the distal end into the ground, resist egress from the ground, and prevent rotation, and a plurality of interconnected intermediate rails providing structural integrity and increasing the panels effectiveness as a barrier, while

*PATENT
NEW APPLICATION
DEPOSIT DATE: APRIL 15, 2004
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE EXPRESS MAIL AIRBILL NO. ER 302 415 746 US
ATTY. DOCKET NO. 040220.002*

maintaining a free area ratio of the rigid safety panel of at least eighty-five percent, wherein the rigid safety panel encloses a campfire and the upper rail is above the campfire flame height.